



## **Executive Officer's Statement**

### **Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board**

**May 2, 2005**



---

#### **California Honors Crime Victims, Survivors, and Advocates at April Tribute**

On April 5 Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger addressed nearly 300 crime victims, survivors, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, victim advocates, and victim service providers gathered at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley for "A Tribute to Crime Victims' Rights in California." Sponsored by the Office of the Governor, the California District Attorneys Association, and the Institute for the Advancement of Criminal Justice, the event also featured speakers John Gillis, Director of the Federal Office for Victims of Crime, and the Honorable Lois Haight, Supervising Judge of Contra Costa County Superior Court and former Chair of President Ronald Reagan's Task Force on Victims of Crime.

Fred Aguiar, Secretary of the State and Consumer Services Agency and Board Chair, was also a speaker at the event. Several awards were presented during the tribute, and the organizers also recognized each domestic violence shelter, Mothers Against Drunk Driving chapter, rape crisis center, and victim witness assistance program in California with more than 25 years of service to the state's citizens.

The tribute was held at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library to commemorate the late President's commitment to crime victim issues. President Reagan inaugurated the first National Crime Victim's Rights Week in 1981 and it was his 1982 Task Force on Victims of Crime whose final recommendations shaped the future of victim services in the United States. President Reagan also signed the 1984 Victims of Crime Act into law.

April 10-16 was national Crime Victims' Rights Week, and Californians in every corner of the state planned dozens of different events to recognize crime victims and to advocate for their rights. The week's theme, "Justice Isn't Served Until Crime Victims Are," was emphasized in many of the events. The Board sent media kits, ribbons, banners, and posters to victim witness assistance centers across California to help them publicize their events. The Board participated in many of the following activities:

- Los Angeles was the site of two major events. On April 10 the Los Angeles Mayor's Office and the City Attorney sponsored a 5K "Run for Victim's Rights" that raised money for victim service agencies. On Tuesday, April 12, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and District Attorney honored the Good Samaritans, emergency personnel, law enforcement officers, and victim advocates who helped the victims of the Glendale train derailment, as well as the victims who lost their lives and those who survived the crash.
- Orange County Community Service Programs held its Annual Victims' Rights Conference and Awards Luncheon on April 6.
- The Alameda County District Attorney's Victim Witness Assistance Division held "A Tribute to Victims and Survivors" on April 14.



- The San Francisco District Attorney hosted a ceremony to recognize crime victims, a community organization, law enforcement officers, and a prosecutor on April 14. On April 20 the office unveiled a memorial quilt honoring homicide victims.
- San Diego County celebrated "Citizens of Courage" at its annual awards luncheon on April 13.
- Santa Clara honored "Unsung Heroes" at its annual awards luncheon on April 14.
- The 16<sup>th</sup> annual Victims' March on the Capitol was held on April 12.
- The Sacramento County District Attorney's Office presented "Outstanding Citizen Awards for 2005" on April 15.
- Shasta County Victim Witness Assistance Center's annual luncheon honoring crime victims took place on April 13.
- Riverside County held three events throughout the course of the week in Riverside, Indio, and Murietta.

### **Victim Compensation Program Advisory Committee Launched March 16**

In March, a dozen of the Board's key partners from a spectrum of state agencies and statewide organizations representing crime victims were invited to serve on the new Victim Compensation Program Advisory Committee. Representatives from the Office of Emergency Services; the Attorney General's Office; the Health and Human Services Agency; the Department of Corrections; the Judiciary; the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training; and victim advocacy organizations were invited to join the Committee.

At the first meeting, on March 16, the Committee heard a presentation from Dr. Alicia Boccari, Director of the University of California San Francisco Trauma Recovery Center, on the Center's successful three-year pilot to provide comprehensive service to victims of violent crime in an underserved community.

In future meetings the Committee will work to identify crime victims' issues and needs with respect to compensation, as well as to provide feedback for the Program's projects and initiatives. The Committee will also provide an important avenue for coordination, networking, and new collaborative efforts among agencies, organizations and departments serving victims.

Committee meeting schedules and agendas will be posted in advance, and will be open to the public. The next meeting of the Victim Compensation Program Advisory Committee will take place on Wednesday, June 15, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Board office in Sacramento.

### **Board Updates**

#### **Restitution Toolkit Released**

In April the Restitution Recovery and Accounting Division (RRAD) released a new toolkit to help district attorneys and probation officers assure that restitution is properly ordered and implemented in criminal cases. The toolkit, published on a compact disk, contains sample motions for modification of a restitution order, universal briefs, and points and authorities for

restitution issues. Some of the material included on the disk was created as a result of the Four-Year Judge's Pilot Program on restitution recently completed by the Board. The disk also includes relevant statutes from the Government Code, Welfare and Institutions Code, and Penal Code. The toolkit will be distributed at RRAD training sessions for assistant district attorneys, restitution staff, and probation officers, and will also be available upon request. In addition to the toolkit, RRAD also recently placed the Restitution Bench Guide on the Board's website in an effort to make access to the bench guide easier for judges and prosecutors.

### **New Victim Compensation Program Poster Published**

The Victim Compensation Program (VCP) has published a new, bilingual, full-color poster. The new poster features the slogan, "Violence Hurts Everyone ... We Can Help," in English and Spanish. The Board is distributing the 20,000 posters throughout the state to increase public awareness about crime victim compensation. Victim Witness Assistance Centers will each receive copies of the poster. Distribution will also include law enforcement agencies, hospitals and other victim service providers. IMC Productions at California State University, Chico, designed the poster.

### **VCP Spring Training Features Reimbursement Issues**

The Board's Policy and Training Section, in conjunction with the Liens and Overpayments Recovery Section (LORS), has designed a three-day training program for Board staff members and staff in the Joint Powers County Verification Units. The training features, among other subjects, new information about reimbursement sources presented by LORS staff members.

The new information will help claims verifiers maximize the benefits available to crime victims. The training clarifies complicated subjects including workers' compensation, automobile insurance, civil suits, liens and subrogation. The LORS segment of the training focuses on an overview of the statute; the role of the claims verifier; the role of LORS staff in recovering funds due to the Board; and ways to help victims access benefits and understand the purpose of the Board's recovery efforts. The training will help claims verifiers and support staff communicate these important concepts to claimants.

In addition to information about reimbursement and recovery sources, the training also covers eligibility, mental health expenses, medical and dental expenses, relocation, and income and support loss. In April and May, Board staff will present the training in Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento, and Santa Clara counties.

### **New Members Join the Board's Executive Team**

In April the Board welcomed three executive staff members to new positions at the Board. Kathleen Andleman joined the Board on April 18 as the Board's Chief Counsel. Ms. Andleman has extensive experience in both government and the private sector. Before joining the Board, she was Manager, General Counsel Section, at the Franchise Tax Board (FTB) and was with the FTB for more than 12 years. Her private sector experience was with the law firms of de la Vergne and McMurtry, and Balfrey and Abbott.

The Board's new Chief Information Officer, Debra Gonzales, began her job on April 13. Ms. Gonzales was the Administration Bureau Chief at the Stephen P. Teale Data Center and prior to that was manager of the Teale's Operations Service Branch. Ms. Gonzales has

more than 19 years in state service in the information technology arena, including 10 years at the Health and Welfare Agency Data Center.

Dennis Boydston has been appointed Deputy Executive Officer, Administration. Previously, Mr. Boydston was the Deputy Executive Officer for RRAD. Since February he has been the acting Deputy Executive Officer for Administration, replacing Luisa Park who was appointed Executive Officer of the Office of Public School Construction by Governor Schwarzenegger. Mr. Boydston has more than 23 years of government experience that include seven years as the Chief of Administration at the Office of Public School Construction and six years at the helm of the School Facilities Program in that office.

### **Issue Update**

#### **Federal Funding Faces Uncertain Future**

There is a proposal in the federal budget from the Office of Management and Budget that would remove \$1.2 billion in the federal Crime Victims Fund. These are funds that would support future federal, state and local victim services. Potentially, that action could mean that funds would not be available for victim services from VOCA at the beginning of FFY 2007.

The Crime Victims Fund provides critical funding that helps millions of victims of all types of crime every year. VOCA, supported by fines paid by offenders convicted of federal crimes, is the only federal grant program supporting direct assistance services to victims of all types of crimes (Victim Witness Assistance Programs) and supplementing state victim compensation funds.

While the Administration is proposing VOCA spending in FFY 2006 of \$650 million, the budget also calls for removal of all the amounts remaining in the Fund that were pledged for future victim services plus additional amounts deposited during FFY 2006—funds that would otherwise be available in FFY 2007 and subsequent years. The VOCA Fund would begin FFY 2007 with a zero balance. Since nearly 90 percent of VOCA funds are distributed through formula grants to states, the Justice Department must know how much is available at the beginning of each year. Beginning FFY 2007 with a zero balance in the Fund may mean there would be no money available for State victim assistance and crime victim compensation grants that year.

Numerous victims' groups, victim service providers, and law enforcement organizations have expressed opposition to the proposed budget. Scores of local elected officials, prosecutors, law enforcement agencies, and local victim service providers have also written to oppose the rescission of VOCA funds, including Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board Member and San Bernardino County District Attorney, Michael A. Ramos.

**County of San Bernardino**  
**Office of the District Attorney**  
**MICHAEL A. RAMOS, District Attorney**

April 8, 2005

The Honorable Congressman Jerry Lewis  
41<sup>st</sup> Congressional District Representative  
2112 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Lewis:

I am writing this letter with the hope that you can help with an issue dear to my heart – Victims of Crime.

We are at a crisis point. The President's proposed budget for fiscal year 2006 (FY06) seeks to take back or rescind all the money remaining in the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) after the FY06 appropriation – an estimated \$1.26 billion that assists and compensates victims of crime.

As the District Attorney for the largest geographical county in the United States and as a member of the California Victims Compensation and Government Claims Board, I know firsthand the negative impact it would have on all victims across our county, the State of California and the country.

Last year the State of California received 64 million dollars that was spread out throughout the 58 counties to support victims in their time of need. This helped pay for doctors bills, funeral costs, relocation of domestic violence victims, counseling, lost wages and other support services that are critical to the rehabilitation and justice for victims of crime.

As you are aware, this is a non-taxpayer funded source of support. All criminal fines collected at the federal level are deposited in the VOCA Fund. These fines send a huge message to those criminals that prey on victims in that they will be held financially responsible as part of the punishment for their criminal behavior.

As we approach the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Victims' Rights week, I believe it is a perfect opportunity for our leaders, including the President of the United States, to stand up for victims of crime by removing the proposed budget item involving these crucial funds. I would also request that the cap on these funds be increased, which would reduce the surplus and accumulation, so as to ensure a steady level of funding for future victims.

April 8, 2005  
Congressman Jerry Lewis  
Page 2

Please feel free to call if you have any further questions.

This issue is so important to me that I am willing to fly out to your Washington office to discuss further or testify in front of any committees dealing with this vital issue.

Sincerely,  
Your friend,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael A. Ramos".

---

MICHAEL A. RAMOS  
District Attorney

MAR:kd

cc: Anne Seymour  
Karen McGagin, CVCGB  
David LeBahn, CDAA  
Becky Morazzini, CDAA  
Marilynn Kimball, SBDA